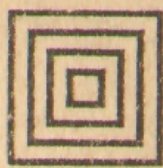


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THE
POLITICAL FATE
OF DOBROUDJA
AFTER
THE BERLIN CONGRESS

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THE POLITICAL FATE OF DOBROUDJA

AFTER

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I.

The Annexation of the Province to Roumania.

The fate of Dobroudja up to the time of the Berlin treaty was being fused entirely with that of integral Bulgaria. The historical theories as to some sort of Ogous-Seldjouk state in Dobroudja and its subsequent domination by the Wallachian chief Mircho until the time prior to the fall of Bulgaria under the Turks, during the reign Mourad and Bayazid, are devoid of all seriousness. These are only transitory political incidents without any lasting historical consequences. Even during the first years of the Turkish domination over Bulgaria, the Bavarian traveller Schiltberger,¹⁾ who had traversed the Danubian lands and had taken part in the battle of Nikoppolis during the year 1396, tells us: „I was in three lands and all of the three are being called Bulgaria. The first Bulgaria lies opposite the Iron Gates; its main city is called Vidin (Pudem). The second Bulgaria lies on the opposite side of Wallachia; its capital is Tirnovo (Ternau). The third Bulgaria lies at the mouth of the Danube; its capital is Kaliakra (Kallacercka).

¹⁾ Reisen des Johannes Schiltberger, München 1859, page 93.

It is evident, therefore, that Dobroudja prior to its fall under Turkey has neither been Balascheffs „mighty state“ of the Ogouses, nor a Wallachian province under the rule of Mirtcho, because, if it were so, Dobroudja could not have transformed itself at once into a „third Bulgaria“, as Schiltberger calls it, and that just at the moment when out of a Ogous and Wallachian land it becomes actually a Turkish province.

The incidents with respect to the Ogous population in Dobroudja and the passing of Mirtcho over across the Danube at a time of anarchy in Dobroudja, are mere reminders of that Roumanian political ambush of 1913, which the Roumanians endeavoured to register in history and to perpetuate with various monuments as a grand conquest over Bulgaria. These we overlook in passing as being matters which have exercised absolutely no substantial influence over the Bulgarian character of Dobroudja which has been and still remains a Bulgarian land, indissolubly bound up with the history and political fate of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian nation up to the time of the Berlin treaty.

Despite the great role which the Bulgarians of Dobroudja played in the spiritual awakening of the Bulgarians before their liberation, in accordance with art. 46 of that treaty the province was turned over to Roumania as follows:

„Along with the islands of the Danubian delta and Serpent's Island, the sandjak of Tultcha, which includes the counties of Kilia, Sultna, Mahmoudia, Isaktcha, Tultcha, Matchin, Babadag, Hirsovo, Kustendja and Medjidié, is also turned over to Roumania. Moreover, the Principality receives also the territory lying to the south of Dobroudja up to the line of demarcation, which begins east of Silistra and terminates on the Black Sea, south of Man-

galia. The boundary line of demarcation will be fixed on the spot itself by an European Commission, appointed for the delimitation of Bulgaria's frontier."

According to this text Dobroudja consists only of the Tultcha sandjak (district), in which are included the counties of Kustendja and Medjidié, while the zone south of the line of these two counties as well as up to that of the old Roumano-Bulgarian frontier is given to Roumania, by reason of the strenuous intercession of the French delegate in the congress, Mr. Waddington, as a strategic boundary, necessary for safeguarding the possession of Dobroudja.

The whole of Roumania rose up against this arrangement of the Berlin Congress and a general outcry of discontent and protest prevailed from one end of the country to the other: „We do not want Dobroudja! Either Bessarabia or nothing!"

But the decision of the Berlin Congress had to be enforced, because it was a *conditio sine qua non* for the conclusion of the Berlin treaty, imposed by the decisive and categorical demand of Russia, expressed by Count Schouvaloff in the following ultimative form: „Without the cession of Bessarabia to Russia, „it would be impossible to restore the good relations between Russia and Roumania, so necessary for the strengthening of the peace in the East."

That declaration was made as a reply to Lord Beaconsfield, who had interceded for the integrity of the Roumanian territory up to that time.

And notwithstanding that it was the will of Russia, the discontent from the cession of Dobroudja to Roumania was no less noticeable among the Bulgarians who had just been liberated by Russia. Long after the liberation we were murmuring against „this injustice of the Berlin

congress". Full 5 years in our maps upon native land the green colour encompassed all the Bulgarian lands, which the Turks had lost during the war, while in our geographies we were taught, how Europe split Bulgaria, which had just been resurrected, into five parts, out of which only the one it left free, the second — turned into an autonomy, the third — ceded again to Turkey, the fourth — presented to Servia, while the fifth — Dobroudja — arbitrarily gave to Roumania.

Roumania did not want it, because it was Bulgarian, and, of course, because some day it was bound to lose it; we wanted it, because it was our own; but it was offered in sacrifice to those general European interests, which dictated that the freedom of the Danubian mouth be guaranteed and that the aspirations of Russia towards Constantinople be checked — an object for which, after the Crimean war, Bessarabia was given to Roumania, but the return of which, after the triumphant Russian war, could no longer be denied to the conqueror.

II.

Dobroudja unknown and foreign to Roumania and to her interests. — The Chamber and Senate, deputies and prominent statesmen against the annexation of the territory across the Danube. — In the estimation of Sturdza and Karp — Dobroudja, the sea and Kustendja are not necessary to Roumania.

With the exception of Michel Kogalnitichanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, all Roumanian political men, all men of letters, the press, the Chamber and Senate declared themselves at the Berlin Congress in the most decisive manner against the annexation of Dobroudja to Roumania, and that independently of the fact whether Bessarabia remained in future Roumanian or not.

All the convincing speeches, arguments and considerations of Kogalnitichanu, which may be reduced to the point that Dobroudja is giving to Roumania the Danubian mouth and an outlet into the sea through Kustendja and that finally that is a political prerequisite, in the presence of which Roumania is compelled to bow down its head, remained in vain. They become powerless and are being lost sight of in the presence of the objections: To Roumania Dobroudja is a foreign country, inhabited by foreign races which forebode dangers and commotions; Roumania, having at its disposal the ports of Braila and Galatz, has no need of Dobroudja, which to-morrow it may lose anew.

In their sessions of January 26, 1878, the Chamber and the Senate voted the following declaration: „The assembly and the Senate announce that they are

determined to preserve the integrity of the country and not to accept any kind of expropriation from its own territory, under any designation whatever and against any kind of compensation or indemnity."

On the other hand the newspapers unanimously proclaimed: „We cede nothing, and we accept nothing. Even if brutal force were to rob us of Bessarabia, we do not want Dobroudja."

To this outcry was added also the decision of a private convocation of 46 deputies and this resolution was intended to be passed in the session of June 28, 1878, and was to the effect: „Taking into consideration that any kind of annexation across the Danube is not in the interest of Roumania and that it will become the cause for complications and future agitations, it does not accept the annexation of Dobroudja to Roumania in any manner or on any ground.

Only Michel Kogalnitcanu is trying to seek and find justifiable causes for its acceptance, but even two years after the annexation he finds himself within a Chamber, in which, as he expressed it, there were hardly „4—5 deputies, who were somewhat acquainted with Dobroudja." Later on in 1880, when the first law regarding the organisation of Dobroudja was being promulgated, Bratianu himself demands for it a severe and exceptional regime, unknown until that time even in Turkey, in accordance with which, courts were being improvised to execute by hanging at once the guilty persons, as was the case in „the American deserts". At the same time in a pamphlet issued by Lokustianu, the best judge then of Dobroudja, it is said: „that is a land inhabited by a crowd of rebellious elements, congregated from all the ends of the earth, inhabited by races of foreign extraction."

As against the arguments of Kogalnitchanu regarding the Danubian mouth and the sea, this same Lokustianu sarcastically retorted: „The organ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (meaning Kogalnitchanu) it would seem is desirous of telling us: „This land is necessary to us on account of the sea and its ports; unfold history and read the eternal struggles of the Montenegrees in order to reach the sea, think of the significance, which Kustendja and Mangalia might have!“

Resolute objections, however, was making in this respect the world-renowned statesman Dimitr Sturdza, former prime-minister and chief of the Liberal party, after Bratianu, who concluded one of his extensive speeches against the annexation of Dobroudja, uttered in the Senate on September 29, 1878, in the following words: „How? From what time, because of Dobroudja, Old Roumania does no longer deserve any further attention? What will become of Galatz and Braila, when we make out of Kustendja a new port and a railway for the direct transportation of local and foreign goods? Is it possible that you have the right to ruin these two most important ports of the land, in order that you may create a new one, and that within a territory, which you yourselves know not how long we may be able to retain?“

Peter Karp, at last, resolutely declared himself both against the acceptance of Dobroudja and against the creation out of Kustendja a new Roumanian port; against the first, being an act, which is in conflict with morality in politics; against the second, being something foreign to the real Roumanian needs and interests. He concluded: „Owing to all these considerations, I am against the acceptance of Dobroudja. . . As far as Bessarabia is concerned, I am of the opinion that we must accept that

which is being imposed upon us and which we could not ward off“.

Portentous, however, for the present events is also the following considerate thought on his part:

„As respects myself, I cannot submit to the Berlin congress regarding the question of Dobroudja, because the occupation of Dobroudja in my estimation means nothing else, but the obligation that we bind ourselves with Russia for ever“. But in that eventuality Karp had always discerned danger for Roumania.

On the eve of the Roumanian participation in the present war, Take Ionescu in his noisy parliamentary speech in favour of intervention during the month of December 1915 reverts to that famous speech of Karp, in order to accuse and ridicule him. With that object in mind he generalised it in the following perverted form: „Once resolved that Bessarabia be taken away from us, let us reject Dobroudja in order that we may never forget our hatred towards Russia“.

Thirty years afterwards, the son of Kogalntchanu, in his book on Dobroudja, pointing out to the rupture with Russia, introduced the thought that, if Roumania had managed to be reconciled at that time with the situation she could have even then with the coöperation of Russia herself occupied Silistra as well — the city which the congress had refused to grant her. „But in the heat of our indignation, which had taken possession of us then, we let slip by — says he — the favourable moment and were left with Dobroudja without any strategical frontiers on the south“. Meanwhile, as we saw, such frontier was given her, but then neither Roumania could have followed its present Bulgarophobe rapacious policy, which accentuated her strategic appetites even as far as the Bal-

kans, nor yet did Russia think of establishing her in the Balkans at the expense of Bulgaria.

The congress gave to Roumania more than Russia was giving her even as her won ally at San Stefano, and it was given not as her historical and ethnical right, but as a means for restricting Russian aspirations, which at that time threatened the general European interests, in sacrifice of which were offered those of Bulgaria, including the rights of the Bulgarian nation.

III.

The new regime of „Roumanian Justice“ and „Bulgarian Danger“. — Kogalnitchanu (father and son) against the Roumanian government in Dobroudja. — The first act of violence. —

Despite the consciousness on the part of Roumania to the effect that Dobroudja does not belong to it and should not belong to it, in view of the inevitable loss of Bessarabia, however, the state egoism within it could not but suppress the excited political conscience and thought, and the two eminent statesmen — Kogalnitchanu and Bratianu, who held the government of the country in their hands, decided to accept Dobroudja.

The fate of Dobroudja once decided in favour of Roumania, Kogalnitchanu, in his role of a judicious money-changer, commenced to study its actual material worth, in order that he may not be deceived in the transaction, which was one of pure exchange.

Fremdenblatt announced: „From the conversation of the correspondent of the Augsburg Allgemeine Zeitung held with Mr. Kogalnitchanu it appears, that the people from Bucharest are seeking motives for the acceptance of the exchange, offered by Russia. While the Roumanian journal „Pressa“ adds: „The honoured minister Kogalnitchanu is collecting in the Ministry of Public Buildings statistical facts respecting Dobroudja, respecting its worth as compared with Bessarabia. To undertake the task of studying the value of that exchange is equivalent to an acceptance of the principle as to the exchange.“

And Dobroudja was accepted.

On November 14, 1878, Prince Carol issued in Braila a manifesto in regard to the annexation, which manifesto was prepared by Kogalnitchanu himself.¹⁾ The manifesto addressed to „the inhabitants of Dobroudja,” said:

„The great European powers, through the treaty of Berlin, joined your country to Roumania.”

„We are not entering your frontiers, fixed by Europe, as conquerors; but you yourselves do know that much Roumanian blood was shed for the liberation of the nations on the right bank of the Danube.”

To whom are these needless apologies and these convincing arguments as to the occupation of Dobroudja being addressed?

To the Roumanians? Evidently not, for Dobroudja then would not have been designated as „your fatherland.” The apposition of the word „fatherland” to Roumania speaks for itself.

Is it to the Turks? Then from whom have the Roumanians been liberating with their „abundant blood” the nations on the right bank of the Danube?

Clearly, the Roumanian ruler himself recognised through his manifesto the indisputable character of Dobroudja, whose fate he is endeavouring to justify with those arguments regarding its new enslavement. In order to mollify the rawness of that introduction, in the manifesto is being promised to the population a „Roumanian justice, constitutional equality and religious freedom,” such as the people of Dobroudja never saw. To the falsity and the deception, which frequently in Roumania played the role of fundamental principles in the the government, as respects Dobroudja was added the violence and the systematic colonising terror.

¹⁾ That manifesto was issued also in the Bulgarian language. The Bulgarian text with original orthography see in the supplement.

The affairs reached to such a state that during 1899, viz., after 20 years of Roumanian government, the Kogalnitchanus, father and son, could not restrain their indignation at the ugliness of the results from their own act, and Kogalnitchanu, the younger, calls it „Tara de jaf“ — „Land of plunder,“ while its administration — „an administration of terror and dishonour.“ On the other hand, Kogalnitchanu, the senior, describing in one of his parliamentary speeches on March, 1899, the deplorable condition of Dobroudja, says: „That piece of land, which supplants the loss of Bessarabia, is groaning under the pressure of the Roumanian administrative officials, who are worse and more to be feared than the Turkish Janissaries“.

Meanwhile Turkey at the first convenient moment annihilated the Janissaries, but Roumania allowed its own prefects, „the rulers from the main cities“ to remain all-powerful in Dobroudja, even to very last moment prior to its liberation, to save „the little piece of land“ from „pericolut bulgaresc“ the Bulgarian danger and Roumania from „primejdia nationala“ national perils.

The fear from the „Bulgarian danger“ explains that impossible regime. The foundations of that regime, however, were all placed by Mihail Kogalnitchanu, the creator of the first exclusive organic law for Dobroudja in the year 1880.

In the motives expounded in support of that law it is said expressly: „The ultimate object of that law-measure is the complete assimilation of Dobroudja.“ And immediately after that it is added: „It should not be thought, however, that this assimilation desired is a sort of inovation, a reform of violence, which must be imposed upon a country totally alien to Roumania!“

And since the real complexion of the country was of just such a nature, since Dobroudja was totally alien to Roumania, it was quite natural that the assimilation should also be of a violent nature.

On October 16, 1879, Carol — together with Kogalnitchanu and with the war minister Colonel Leka in company with the Archbishop of Galatz, visited Dobroudja and stopped in the city of Tultcha. On the same day the authorities of the Bulgarian church of „St. George“ were forced to recognise the hierarchy of the Roumanian state church; and forthwith Kogalnitchanu telegraphed to Bucharest respecting his victory: . . . „On Wednesday in the morning His Royal Highness will be present at the church service, which will be celebrated by the Bishop of the Lower Danubian sections in the Bulgarian church, whose authorities at the time of His Royal Highness' sojourn in the city recognised the Roumanian church jurisdiction“.

Among the Bulgarians there occurred a commotion, the Church trustees called a meeting, censured the yielding spirit of the priests¹⁾ and sent a deputation to Kogalnitchanu to declare to him that the Bulgarians have their own bishop, the Bishop of Dorostolo-Tcherven and that they could not recognise any other bishop. That position, which was in complete conformity with the stipulations of art. 46 of the Berlin treaty, whereby the church hierarchy then existing was guaranteed, was tersely rejected by Kogalnitchanu with the words: „There could not be but one orthodox Church. I recognise no schism. If anyone is displeased, let him go to Bulgaria.“ There are people

¹⁾ At that time the Bishop of the Tultcha Episcopacy, the Vicar of Dorostolo — Tcherven — Bishop Clement Branitski, ordained as such in Tultcha, was already absent and later supplanted Ilarion in the office of Tirnovo.

who are maintaining the justness of that position as well, — a question which will not here be discussed, — nevertheless it was forced upon the Dobroudja people in a brutal, demonstrative and anti-Bulgarian manner, which betrays the attitude manifested by the Roumanians in Dobroudja and which attitude was never displayed either towards the Greeks or towards the Russians.

Notwithstanding that, during the first years of its domination over Dobroudja, Roumania had espoused in its policy for assimilating the provincê a certain tact. And while on the one hand it pointed its fist of violence, on the other hand it resorted to caresses in its dealings with the Bulgarians. The first Roumanian mayor of Tultcha was Dimitraki Todoroff, former Tultcha delegate at the Constantinople Church Assembly, whose name as a mayor of Tultcha figured in the foundation act at the dedication of the monument, commemorating the annexation of Dobroudja, which commenced to be built on October 17, 1879.

IV.

The Regime of the Exclusive Laws. — How the Roumanians do assimilate. — The All-powerful Prefects. — V. Kogalnitichanu in Conflict with the Regime in Dobroudja.

For want of favourable conditions to effect unity with Roumania, the regime, which was forthcoming in Dobroudja, was that of the exclusive laws. Such were: the law regarding the organisation of Dobroudja, March 9, 1880, the law respecting private ownership of property, April 3, 1882, and the law concerning the judicial organisation of Dobroudja, March 30, 1886, which altered and supplemented the department for judicial authority in the law of 1880. All the three laws constituted something special, in accordance with which the administrative authority appeared all-powerful over all personal, real-estate, civic and political rights with an expressed restriction of judicial responsibility on the part of the organs of that authority.

It would seem that the object of Kogalnitichanu, who was the author of the first two laws, was that the regime must be regarded as only temporary. For that reason his son, V. Kogalnitichanu, defends it as such in the following words:

„At that time the consequences of the political agitations, provoked by the war of 1877 and the Berlin treaty were still felt. Austria-Hungary still experienced grave difficulties in connection with Bosnia and Hertzegovina, which, as was the case with Dobroudja, were inhabited by alien nationalities. In Bosnia and Hertzegovina.

the population had risen up with arms in hand. Who could guarantee the tranquility in Dobroudja? The feelings of the Dobroudja people were not known. We had to work in the dark. That explains the exclusive arrangements of the law regarding the organisation of Dobroudja“.

While M. Kogalnitchanu himself in 1880 had said: „I am fully convinced that two years later we will succeed in effecting such changes in Dobroudja as to enable it to enjoy our constitution“.

In the meantime dozens of years elapsed, the law respecting the ownership of real estate remained in force, followed by a series of modifications in the years 1884, 1885, 1889 and 1893, but the exclusive regime was becoming more and more exacting, the fear from „the Bulgarian danger“ was growing larger in the eyes of the Roumanian governments, while the assimilation of Dobroudja was becoming far more remote.

Vassili Kogalnitchanu became a Dobroudja citizen in 1899 and a movement was initiated for putting an end to that regime. He described the conditions under which the forthcoming fight should be conducted in the following manner: „Dobroudja was turned into a colony, in which the officials who were guilty of misdeeds were being exiled, to whom a free hand to rob the local population was given. The administration became one of the worst. The political measures in connection with the law for the organisation of Dobroudja became simply administrative measures, a pretext for oppression, abuses and countless transgressions. The prefect became everything. He did appoint and still appoints mayors, who were alien to the locality, in which they held their offices, — people from the other side of the Danube; he persecuted the press; he altered and distorted the elective registers and the

elective counties; he was expelling citizens from his own district; he was driving out the lawyers, who, by reason of the special law respecting the judicial organisation of Dobroudja, were abandoned to the mercy of the prefects, who crowded the villages with their own favourites and instilled fear and trembling among the population." And the same individual cites a memoir, in which it is said: „The beasts of prey whom we dread are our officials; if they need any money, they plunder us, if they are thirsty for blood, they suck our blood. When the people are oppressed, robbed, tormented and their blood is being shed, they must resort to the courts and then anew they are being maltreated and through a false application of the law innumerable hardships in life are being imposed upon them, so that they are completely crushed down."

„The officials of all categories constituted a real terror to the population. And from the unceasing acts of oppression in that province there has been provoked an incredible mental state among the people. The prefects delegated their authority to their inferior officials, the latter to others, who were subservient to them and the lower the steps of the official hierarchy, the more did the personal guarantee for citizens and villagers disappear. The mayors, who were among the most depraved and who were unable to live on the other side of the Danube, faithful agents of the dominant class in the large cities, were secure, since their leaders, unaffected by the cabinet changes in Bucharest, stood firmly in their positions and they could quietly continue their operations. All that was done in the name of nationalism, the magic word, which had and still is having its high course in Bucharest. And these people, who were putting into despair even the Roumanians themselves and who were hated by the population, were the bearers of the great national idea. To them

was entrusted the application of the law enacted in 1880. Sure of their stability as officials, they were saying to those, who did not like their administration: „Go to America! Emigrate from here!“ And the emigration which followed is well known. We could fill whole volumes, if we were to reproduce even a small part of the material which we possess regarding „the administration in Dobroudja“.

In vain V. Kogalnitchanu, Luka Ioanesku, K. Pariano are trying to convince the public that „the Bulgarian danger“ and „the Bulgarian agitation“ do not exist in Dobroudja. The presence of the Bulgarians as a dominant element was sufficient in itself to pursue as an apparition the Roumanian nationalists and governments; and the exclusive transitory regime, such as is being depicted by this good Roumanian, remained in force to the end.

The assimilation, which his father was longing to effect, did not come to pass, and Dobroudja, despite the noble fight on the part of the son for its rights, assisted as he was by the Dobroudja Bulgarians, remained fruitless.

V.

The Assimilation and the Fear from the Bulgarians. — „The Bulgarians are coming!“ — Article 29. — The elective Regime. — The Struggle for Rights. — The Law of 1909. — The exclusive Regime remained. —

In the assimilation, which was being expected originally, the competent authorities had infused far more of the national feelings and faith than good judgement. These projects and hopes were founded on the statement that sometime in the past the Dacians had been the rulers over Dobroudja and these people had been Roumanians, while Mirtcho had been its sovereign, so that by virtue of the Svistov treaty of 1791 between Turkey and Austria as also by a firman of 1786 given to the Wallachian Chief Mavrogeni, to the Roumanian shepherds from Sedmigradsko was accorded the permission to cross the Danube and to come with their flocks in southern Dobroudja. Out of these shepherds there was, it is true, an insignificant number who were emigrants. Upon these Kogalnitchanu looked as being a nucleus, which will eventually develop into a regular Roumanian immigration. And he personally entered into negotiations with the Roumanians in Sedmigradsko and Bessarabia in order to invite them to settle down permanently in Dobroudja. All these efforts proved futile and as late as 1895 Dobroudja remained as before a foreign and uninhabited land for the Roumanian national cause. It was just about that year and after the construction of the bridge over the Danube at Tchernavoda that the Roumanian immigration was intensified in

the district of Kustendja, through a settlement of Roumanian veterans, peasants from the other side of the Danube and a crowd of new-comers who were brought into the country for the purpose of taking possession of extensive lands gratis, each one of them having received 100 hectares.

It was only after the construction of the bridge that a certain confidence was instilled to the effect that Dobroudja may remain permanently Roumanian territory, although the fear that the opposite eventuality may transpire did not quite cease, and this instinctive fear generated that brutal administrative regime in pursuit of the „energetic nationalisation of Dobroudja“, against which even some of the Roumanians themselves had commenced to rebel.

Meanwhile, Bulgaria, being pressed at that time by a series of international and internal causes, had assumed and firmly stood on the position „friendship with Roumania at any price“. It was conceding everything to Roumania and leaving Dobroudja entirely to its own fate. But notwithstanding that conciliatory spirit on the part of Bulgaria, all sorts of imaginary rumours and legends were current respecting „the Bulgarian agitations“, respecting „the Bulgarian excessive patriotism“, respecting „the Bulgarian danger“ within Dobroudja and even the preposterous rumour „Bulgari vin“ (the Bulgarians are coming) was being disseminated from the frontiers as far as the Danubian mouths.

That tendency still further accentuated the energetic persecutions and the phantom of the revengeful spirit amongst the Bulgarians all the more impressively haunted the Roumanians, despite the short-sighted friendship on the part of Bulgaria.

It was under these conditions that the struggle for securing certain rights to Dobroudja commenced. It actually commenced with an interpellation from Kogalnitchanu on January 29—1899, as a depute from the district of Roman, since, up to the year 1909, Dobroudja had no representatives in the parliament. We extract only the following passages from that interpellation: „We possessed this province for the last 20 years, in order that we may reduce it to a state much worse than that in which we had reduced unfortunate Bessarabia. We are still employing there the exclusive laws, and it is just that which constitutes the striking incapacity of our governments, which within a period of 20 years have done nothing for the improvement of Dobroudja and for the assimilation of its people“.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, badly advised by the Tultcha prefect, is dividing the people of Dobroudja into nationalities and is urging them to vote for two lists of candidates, and, what is still stranger, the majority of them are voting for two councilmen, while the minority for four councilmen, although the government retains the right to appoint three other municipal councilmen, and over and above that to appoint even the mayor himself.

„In Kustendja one section comprises the Greeks and the Roumanians, while the other — all the remaining nationalities, including the Bulgarians; in Tultcha, on the other hand, the first section is composed of all nationalities, i. e. Roumanians, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Germans, Jews, Turks, Tartars, Italians; while the second — only of Bulgarians.

„It is unquestionable that, if the Hungarians should choose in that manner to increase the number of the Transsylvanian Roumanians, in that case we would protest

with all our energy. And it is quite unjust that we, who protested against the laws regarding the Transsylvanian Roumanians, in Dobroudja should resort to actions which are still more reprehensible.

„The prefect of Kustendja distributes and arranges the nationalities in a manner to suit his whim; he ordains who shall be a Roumanian, who — Armenian and who — Bulgarian. The prefect of Tultcha goes still farther by organising a national alliance. The consequence is that the Dobroudja administration has no sufficient authority and power, otherwise there would be no need of such an alliance.

„It is dangerous to play with Roumanian national alliances in Dobroudja, for then the Bulgarians could with equal justice respond with the organisation of a Bulgarian alliance in Dobroudja.

„Dobroudja has never had either freedom of conscience, or civil rights. There exists an unfortunate clause in the law regarding Dobroudja — art. 29-th. The esteemed prefects are using it in relation to every given case. Thus the citizens have no security either for their honour, or for their property; they are not at liberty even to think because they are afraid of their own shadow; in that manner abuses and torments are being heaped on the inhabitants of Dobroudja through the misapplication of art. 29.

Consequently, even after the expiration of 20 years Dobroudja remains as foreign to Roumania as ever it has been. Independently of the interpellation, however, V. Kogalnitchanu undertook the task of speaking in public meetings against these acts of lawlessness, wrote numerous pamphlets and issued newspapers for the same object.

For the success of his fight, not only he himself, but also the group of men around him, put forth strenuous

efforts and a needed tact — so as to represent the action as being purely Roumanian.

„The population in the villages“, says he, „does not participate in this fight“, and still less the foreign nationalities, but only the more intelligent portion of the „Dobroudja Roumanians“.

Meanwhile on March 21 of the same year, „supported by many friends from Dobroudja imbued with the same ideas“, he organised a public meeting in Kustendja, in which were also sent three delegates from the Tultcha district. The document giving power of attorney to these delegates, which was then distributed secretly for obtaining signatures and which was subsequently published by Kogalnitchanu himself, contains 38 signatures of the foremost citizens in the Tultcha district, out of which number 24 were those of Bulgarians, 2 Greeks, 1 German, 1 Roumanian and 10 Roumanians. Among the Bulgarians we find four names of those who today are Sofia citizens, while all the remaining names were those of Bulgarians who were deported recently by the Roumanians as civil captives.

This struggle gave certain results only after the expiration of 10 years. During the year 1909 through a new and a special law to the people of Dobroudja was accorded the right to elect representatives for the parliament. The old exclusive law, however, of 1880 remained in force and Dobroudja acquired political rights without liberty and without the possibility to exercise them, since art. 29 of the Law as regards Dobroudja remained likewise in force.

VI.

The Struggle of the Dobroudja People and the Conservative Party. — A Parallel between Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Dobroudja during 1908 from an International Viewpoint. — The New Law respecting the Political Rights of the Dobroudja People. — The Liberation of Dobroudja. —

The indirect result from the struggle for obtaining civil and political rights in favour of the Dobroudja people was the fact that the Roumanian conservative party was won for that cause.

In the beginning of 1905 the party announced publicly in the city of Yash its adherence to the principle on behalf of granting rights to the people of Dobroudja as a party platform and, having come into power, the conservative government appointed towards the end of 1905 a committee, which was to study and investigate the question in regard to according Dobroudja some political rights. In that committee were to be seen the names of some who had been won for the cause and who, in accordance with the prevalent attitude among the Roumanians, represented Dobroudja as being Roumanised province, having in their statistical statements represented as Roumanians not only the other nationalities, but also Bulgarians, who, naturally, all were contending heroically for the rights of Dobroudja. In the report which that committee presented, among other things, it is said:

„That 150.000 Roumanians,¹⁾ whether from Dobrou-

¹⁾ Roumanian statistics respecting the population and the nationalities in Dobroudja have always been false. At all events the above fi-

dja or emigrants from Roumania proper and from other enslaved Roumanian lands, be kept outside the workings of the general laws, is to do them a great injustice; it is an injustice to those who have abandoned their native hearths and have come to create a new Roumanian fatherland along the shores of the sea and along the Danubian mouths.

„To treat ceaselessly as foreigners the original inhabitant of Dobroudja, is it not equivalent to a doubting of their good faith and to an open humiliation and to an acknowledgement that they are not capable of being full-fledged citizens of the Roumanian kingdom?

„The present exclusive state of affairs, in which this province finds itself, is it not rather a sign of impotence than a measure of foresight?“

That report was prepared as early as at the commencement of 1906, but even the government of the conservative party did not have the boldness to change the extraordinary regime. The Bulgarian danger still could not permit the accomplishment of the political union of Dobroudja with Roumania.

The agricultural rising of the Roumanian peasants in 1907 brought into power the liberal party, while in 1908 and 1909 there followed the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina and the Turkish huriet (project of reforms).— The Bosnians became Austro-Hungarian citizens of equal rights — while the Macedonian bondsmen — Ottoman citizens. In view of these events of international significance, the conduct of Roumania in relation to Dobroudja

gure of the committee appears to be quite probable, since in 1908 the entire number of the population in Dobroudja was 320.000, i. e. 150.000 Roumanian emigrants against 170.000 people of other nationalities, and that at a time when good Roumanians considered Dobroudja as being Roumanised. In 1878 the whole population was about 140.000 inhabitants; where were then the Roumanians?

became one of the most delicate. The country had been proclaiming broadcast that Dobroudja is a wholly Roumanian province, that this province belongs to it not only in fact, but also on historic grounds and that within it everybody is feeling and acting like a Roumanian; when these momentous events were transpiring, Roumania was remaining the only country which, through its exclusive regime in Dobroudja, was refuting the truthfulness of both these affirmations and of its formal position with reference to the province.

Being humiliated by this state of affairs, Roumania decided at last on March 1909 to introduce in the senate and chamber the reform „for giving political rights to Dobroudja“, which project became a law during the month of April the same year.

„The first sensation, which the reading of this law produced — said V. Kogalnitichanu — is a surprise and even an astonishment.

„In propounding the motives for the enactment of the law in question, the declaration ends with the words that „this transitory state should cease“ and that „the time has come to give political rights also to the people on the right bank of the Danube“. And, notwithstanding that, the law did not put a stop at least in part to the transitory situation in Dobroudja. . . .

„Above all things, the new law does not remove the exclusive regime. — Mihail Kogalnitichanu during the year 1880 promised to do away with that exclusive regime within two years, while in 1909 one government and one parliament, called liberal, retain it in toto and in all its severity; and all this transpired just in the moment, when they find it indispensable to grant political rights to the people of Dobroudja as well.

„The law for the organisation of Dobroudja entrusted the power entirely in the hands of the government and prefects, while the law of 1909 left untouched all its provisions and arrangements.

„The exclusive regime will continue in the future as well. — The prefect is allowed the same unlimited rights, while the right of control dwindles to nothing. The parliamentary elections, in view of his insuperable authority, will prove to be something less even than an imitation of elections.

„A regime of political rights without the liberties, a regime of political rights, placed under the guardianship of the prefects and of the government. . .

„Something more; the new law takes away the quality of Roumanian citizenship from a whole category of Dobroudja citizens, who prior to it and by virtue of art. 2, the last clause from the law regarding property of 1882, were included as electors in connection with the municipal and district elections.

„The conflict must continue, because through the enactment of the new law few are those who gained anything, while many are those who lost even that which they had“.

It is evident that the new law came to emphasise once more that, during the year 1900 as well, Dobroudja remained alien to Roumania, just as Roumania is alien to Dobroudja.

The liberation of Dobroudja found it still far from being annexed to Roumania, foreign to the Roumanian laws and to the Roumanian constitution, still in a state of debility, but fighting for its human and civic rights, totally restricted under the oppression of an endless occupation which is opposed to both law and treaty, an occu-

pation to which our war with Roumania during the past 1916-th year put an end.

The Roumanian domination of 38 years' duration over Dobroudja was for the people of Dobroudja only a sort of a long and dreadful dream, interrupted through the flashes of inextinguishable hope for freedom, the earnest for which was not only the instinctive faith in its coming, but also the fact, that the Roumanians never wished to recognise them as subjects and full-fledged citizens of Roumania, that they always looked upon them as aliens and alien subjects, while upon their native land — as an usurped foreign land, which at any moment may be taken away from them.

VII.

Dobroudja is and should remain Bulgarian. — Despite its hopeless situation, it contended to the end for its right of political Union with Bulgaria. — Dobroudja and the coming Peace.

After 38 years' continuous rule, there came at last the day for the fulfilment of the prophetic words uttered by D. Sturdza as early as in the year 1878, and Roumania deserted Dobroudja, ever as alien towards it as in the year 1878 when it had entered within its frontiers.

Historically Dobroudja is the cradle of the first Bulgarian kingdom. Everywhere it is marked by ruins — dumb witnesses of our everlasting sufferings and of our inexhaustible national tenacity in that province, which hides within itself the immortality of our national spirit.

How was it possible then in that land, the aged beds of which are saturated profusely with Bulgarian blood, fructified with the bones of our forefathers and ancestors, the air of which is their immortal breath, the ashes of which carry the protest and the curse against the long-continued oppression over it; how was it possible that the soulless, cowardly and cruel „Roumanian“ — a synonym of the Roman slave in Wallachia ¹⁾, — should find within it love and political unity?

And Roumania abandons it, after a domination of 38 years, not only at a time of an exclusive regime, which is a denial of every conception as to such an unification,

¹⁾ The Roumanian historian Xenopol said: the slave they denominated a Roumanian . . . with the ethnical name of a nation, they designated the most degraded class. (T. L. p. 205.)

but at a time of the phenomenal method of conflict in the history of the wars, to carry away, with an inimical object, at the time of the withdrawl of its troops, the local inhabitants, Bulgarians, although its own subjects, treating them as civil captives and hostages, as being foreigners and its own enemies.

This animosity even after 38 years unceasing domination over Dobroudja, under a strenuous and special assimilatory regime, undisturbed by anyone, constitutes in itself the most striking demonstration, originating from Roumania itself, as to the indisputable Bulgarian character of Dobroudja.

It demonstrated *urbi et orbi* that Dobroudja has been and still remains a Bulgarian land, that it is indissolubly bound to it, since Bulgaria alone has in its possession the prerequisites for a political union with it.

Detached from Bulgaria at the time of its liberation, Dobroudja was subjected to a new and much more dangerous for its national existence servitude. And, notwithstanding that, it bears and endures everything to the end, is fortunate enough to see its emancipation by Bulgarian troops under circumstances of an eternal fear on the part of its new ruler from that „Bulgarian danger“, which it does not cease to constitute for him.

And all that has come to pass under international conditions which were most unfavourable to it and which seemed to whisper to it from all sides: „abandon all those hopes“!

Immediately after the conclusion of the Berlin treaty in 1883 there followed also the alliance of Roumania with the Central Powers. The international relations, which the two mentioned treaties were creating, placed Bulgaria in a position which made it absolutely impossible for it to render help and assistance in any way to Dobro-

udja. And Bulgaria left it to its own fate, because Roumania had behind it and behind its possession of Dobroudja the whole world.

Dobroudja, however, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, stoically withstood to the end this supreme test.

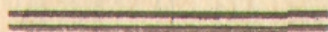
To-day, when all those international interests, by reason of which Dobroudja was detached from its mother country at the Congress of Berlin, not only exist no longer, but are coming to combine and even blend with our historical rights and also with our right of political union with Bulgaria, so strongly and so lucidly expressed on former occasions; when the treaty of alliance of 1883 between Roumania and the Central Powers, having been utilised for a period of 63 years against the Bulgarians, was finally trampled and torn by Roumania itself; when the freedom of Dobroudja was won on the field of battle and was expiated not only through numerous past trials, but also through the Bulgarian blood, so profusely shed over its fields, at Ardjesh, at Kalugareni and at Seret; who is the individual, who, under whatever pretext and upon whatever newly-invented ground, would venture to think that it is possible to separate us from Bulgaria, to place upon us new bloody frontiers with it and to crush the will of that imperative social law, which, despite all the walls of partition and delimitation erected between us, imposed our unification, as the sacred will of Providence itself?

Who is able to prognosticate whether there will be no powers even now, which would be desirous of doing all that; perhaps there will appear men, who will attempt to antagonise even that very law and that very will. But are not the international conflicts, wars and misfortunes due to just such attempts against justice and equity?

One thing however is indisputable — our right to live as a nation; our right to national unification, without

which such an existence is impossible. That right to-day no one will dare to question. It gave force to our arms and it makes our victory obligatory for all, because it appeared as a natural social reaction against the injustice perpetrated against us, a restitution of the international harmony, which was violated by such powers and men. Is it thinkable that this disharmony could be a result even of the present war? Is it thinkable that this disharmony will be the one which will guarantee the peace and the expected international equity and justice?

Herein centers the problem, which has to be solved by the future Peace Conference. Let us be prepared for it, so that we may defend even there the just cause of our arms and the judicial results of our victory.



SUPPLEMENT

A translation from the Bulgarian text of the manifesto issued by Prince Carol I on November 14 — 1878 and directed to the inhabitants of Dobroudja in regard to the annexation of Dobroudja.

CAROL I.

With the mercy of God and the national will autocrat of the Roumanian nation — to all of the present and of the future — greeting.

Inhabitants of Dobroudja!

The great European powers through the Berlin treaty annexed your country to Roumania.

We do not enter within your bounds fixed by Europe as conquerors; but it is well known to you also that much Roumanian blood was shed for the liberation of the nations on the right bank of the Danube.

Inhabitants of every nationality and faith!

Dobroudja, belonging from ancient times to Mirtcho the Old and to the Great Stefan, from this day constitutes a part of Roumania. From now on you are depending upon a Government which decides and directs not through arbitrary means and methods, but through a law which is studied and approved by the nation.

The holiest and the most precious human gifts, such as life, honour and property are placed under the defence

of a Constitution, for which many nations are envious. Your faith, your families and the thresholds of your abodes will be protected by the our laws and no one will dare violate them without receiving due punishment therefor.

Mussulman inhabitants!

The Roumanian sense of justice does not discriminate in respect to nationality or religion. Your religion, your families will be safeguarded on the same footing as those of the Christians. Your religious and family affairs as regards yourselves will be entrusted to Muftis and Judges selected by people of your own nationality and faith. And thus you Christians and you Mussulmans may with confidence greet the Roumanian authorities, for they are coming with the only object to put an end to those sad trials which you experienced and to heal the wounds which the war inflicted upon you, to defend the person, your property and your lawful interests and finally to develop your moral and material well-being.

The Roumanian troops which are entering into Dobroudja have no other appointment but to preserve the order, to give an example for good discipline and to defend your peaceful life. And thus greet with love the Roumanian flag, which to you will prove a flag of freedom, a flag of justice and peace.

Within a short time your country will receive, by means of the Constitution, the required training, which will provide for all your wants and guard your morality, by putting on a solid basis your existence as citizens. Till that time it will devolve upon the Roumanian authorities to ascertain and satisfy your needs and customs, to secure your welfare, to cause you to love the country with whose destiny your destiny is also identical."

(Herein follow enumerated the reforms in the tax system, which are introduced „as a proof of our parental care for you;“ the taxes for 1889 which were to be paid by products will be paid by cash; the tax on real-estate, on taverns, coffe-houses etc. will also be paid by cash, while the tax for liberation from military service will be entirely removed.)

And thus invoking the blessing of the Almighty God, in the name and with the consent of Europe, to-day we take into our possession Dobroudja, which again becomes Roumanian land and sending you our Sovereign greeting, express our desire that this day for this new part of Roumania should mark the beginning for peace and advancement, the beginning of well-being and brotherly love among the sons of the one and the same country.

Issued in Braila, November 14 in the year of God's grace 1878 and of our reign 13-th.

CAROL.

President of the Ministerial Council
Minister of Agriculture, Commerce,
Public Affairs and for the Mi-
nister of the Ecclesiastical Affairs, **I. K. Bratianu.**

Minister of Foreign Affairs: **M. Kogalnitchanu.**

Minister of the Interior Affairs: **K. A. Rossetti.**

Minister of Finance: **I. Kampianu.**

Minister of Justice: **E. Statesku.**



We recommend to our English readers „**Le Mouvement Dobroudjaï**“ the periodical publication of the Dobroudja organisation in Bulgaria.

The Dobroudja Organisation in Bulgaria

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